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Lakewood Retailer Pleads Guilty to Filing False Tax Returns

Tacoma – Aug. 30, 2011 – A Lakewood business pled guilty today to filing false tax returns to cover up the theft of sales tax collected on cash sales.

Smoke and Beer and More had been charged in Pierce County Superior Court with reporting only 27 percent of the retail sales tax it collected from customers from 2006 through early 2009, defrauding the state of at least \$92,543 in sales tax.

Pierce County Superior Court Judge Brian Tollefson ordered the business to pay \$700 in victim penalties and court costs. It already had paid a \$146,768 tax assessment that covered the stolen tax plus penalties and interest.

The charges were brought by the Economic Crime Unit of the Attorney General's Office at the request of the Department of Revenue after it uncovered the scheme during an audit.

According to the charging papers, owner Jong S. Cheon operated two cash registers, and rang up credit or debit card charges on one register and cash transactions on the other. The business didn't report cash sales to the Department of Revenue.

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